

The Ankara consensus: the significance of Turkey's engagement in sub-Saharan Africa

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ABSTRACT

Although research has examined the Turkish agenda for Africa since 2002, few studies have considered Turkey's uniqueness compared to other extra-regional actors. This study is an attempt to analyze and conceptualize the characteristics, benefits, challenges, and limits of Turkey's policy toward the region. This article argues that the characteristics of the Turkish agenda toward sub-Saharan Africa have made Turkey a non-traditional actor in the region, following a novel paradigm of sustainability development: the Ankara consensus. The effects of this model will continue to shape the decisions, policies, and perceptions of the Turkish political elite vis-à-vis Africa and, by extension, the Global South for the foreseeable future.

In the last decade Turkey has earned a peculiar place among extra-regional actors, becoming one of the emerging powers seeking to strengthen their ties with African countries. One reason for this is the transformation of the world economy that has generated an unprecedented demand for mineral and energy resources, making Africa a geopolitical competitive arena.¹

The increased engagement of non-western actors like China, India, Russia, Japan, and Brazil, mainly in the economic field, has affected African relations with western traditional partners on one hand, and has led to a rethinking of Africa's future development on the other.² Since the end of the 1990s, Turkey's relationship with Africa has revived, gaining momentum in 2005 which was designated as the Year of Africa. Since then the Ankara government has launched several initiatives with African states and assumed the role of strategic partner within regional organizations such as the African Union (AU), and inter-governmental organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). However, active involvement in the Somali crisis since 2011 has deepened Turkey's presence in sub-Saharan Africa, thus changing the nature of Turkey's engagement with the continent. The nature of that engagement is a combination of aid-oriented efforts and an achievement of political and economic goals.

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¹Pádraig Carmody, *The New Scramble for Africa* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011).

²See Shaw Timothy M. Shaw, Andrew F. Cooper, and Gregory T. Chin, 'Emerging Powers and Africa: Implications for/from Global Governance?', *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies* 36, no. 1 (2009): 27–44; Jake Sherman, Megan M. Gleason, W.P.S. Sidhu, and Bruce Jones, eds., *Engagement on Development and Security: New Actors, New Debates* (New York: Center on International Cooperation, 2011).

Turkey's presence in the region has particular characteristics that differentiate it from other external powers.

Turkey's current partnership agenda goes along with the idea of an Ankara Consensus, which is both an alternative approach to African sustainability problems and a useful political discourse to foster Turkish ambitions as an emerging global power.

The traditional 'consensus' formulae are unable to explain the peculiar set of prescriptions that Turkey promotes in sub-Saharan Africa based on its own development experience that – mainly in light of the gradual democratic regression – could be considered a mix between democratic liberalism (Washington consensus) and authoritarian capitalism (Beijing consensus). Besides, the notion of the Ankara Consensus lends itself to include and synthesize Turkish public narrative in which traditional South-South Cooperation (SSC) rhetoric is mixing with Islamic humanitarianism and Third-Worldist discourses.

Drawing critically on the informal diplomacy literature and on the studies of Turkey–Africa relations, this article aims to show that Turkish rapprochement toward sub-Saharan Africa has made Turkey a unique non-traditional actor in the region. Further, a decade after the opening of the engagement agenda toward sub-Saharan Africa, this study is an attempt to analyze and conceptualize the characteristics, benefits, challenges, and limits of Turkey's policy toward the region. The rationale is based on the awareness that Africa, in particular sub-Saharan Africa, has witnessed a transition from dependence on former colonial powers to dependence on emerging powers such as Turkey. Therefore, behind the so-called 'new scramble for Africa', there is a deeper shift into extra-regional actors' leverage that unquestionably will influence the future of the region. Considering the rising saliency of Turkey's involvement in sub-Saharan Africa, there is a need for greater attention from scholars on a few pertinent questions: what are the main factors that drive Turkey's engagement; what does the Ankara Consensus mean and what narrative fosters it; how does Turkey apply, in an original manner, the multitrack approach with the involvement of non-state actors; and what are the limits and weaknesses of Turkey's policy?

To answer these research questions, this article presents its arguments in three sections. In the first section, the main features of the Turkish rapprochement toward sub-Saharan Africa are identified, analyzing the peculiarities that have made Turkey an external actor different from all the others. The second section introduces and explains the idea of the Ankara Consensus understood as an alternative model of sustainable development. Through the analyses of some features of the Turkish assistance model – bilateral engagement, multi-stakeholder, activities coordination and direct delivering aid, the third section explores Turkey's unconventional application of multitrack policy. Finally, the conclusions look at the limits of Turkey's ongoing African policy.

1. Turkish rapprochement to sub-Saharan Africa

1.1. From opening to partnership

Historically, Turkey has always had strong relations with the former Ottoman lands of North Africa, but only in the last 20 years has it started to look toward those countries located below the Maghreb.³ Traditionally, Turkish authorities have looked at these

³Mehmet Özkan, 'Turkey's rising role in Africa', *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 9, no. 4 (2010): 93–105, 94. For the importance of North African provinces during the Ottoman period, mainly between fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, see Andrew

regions as secondary, and peripheral to their interests. However, since the end of the 1990s, Turkey's relations with sub-Saharan African countries have been strengthening. The progressive openness of the economy, the increasing global financial and commercial interconnection, and the search for new opportunities in the non-Western world provided a basis for the establishment of this Action Plan (1998). Since 2004 Turkey has significantly increased its presence in sub-Saharan Africa through trade agreements and bilateral projects. Since the Year of Africa (2005), Turkey has tried to portray itself as an active partner for development assistance, emphasizing its position not only between the West and the East, but also between the North and the South. At the same time, Ankara has increased its diplomatic representation in Africa with the number of embassies increased from 12 (2009) to 39 (2016). All these efforts promoted by Turkey led to its appointment to *observer status* in 2005 and *strategic partner* of the AU in 2008. In addition, Turkey joined the African Development Bank (2008) and strengthened its relations with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in East Africa and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Turkey organized the First Turkey–Africa Cooperation Summit – akin to the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)⁴ – in 2008 that was considered to be the beginning of a steady and sustainable co-operation process.⁵ It was a high-level meeting between Turkey and the African countries (more than 50 AU members). While the FOCAC is mainly a ministerial conference, the Turkey–Africa Summit distinguished itself by the presence of Turkish civil society representatives that contributed to assessing the opportunities and needs of the African continent.⁶ Business associations, as well as other civil society organizations (CSO), have contributed to the growth of Turkey–Africa relations in a private-led approach similar to that championed by the United States (US) and the European Union (EU). Among the CSOs the Gülen movement, between 2005 and 2014, had a special place in the formulation and practical implementation of Turkey's opening to Africa, above all in the education sector through the spreading of schools.⁷ Those schools are well-known for their educational and humanitarian efforts which are fully in line with the UN Sustainable Development Agenda.⁸ Therefore, Gülenist schools have become the leading implementers of Turkey's public diplomacy in Africa, and the first of its kind as a Turkish non-governmental engagement with the continent. However, since 2014, the Turkish government initiated a policy of pressuring and, if possible, closing down the movement's organizations within the country and abroad. After the failed coup attempt of July 2016, Ankara has been putting pressure on African leaders to shut down the movement's schools and transfer them to the control of the state-funded Turkish Maarif Foundation.

C. Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier. A History of the Sixteenth-century Ibero-African Frontier* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 26–44; Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 118–19.

⁴FOCAC was established in 2006 and Beijing committed to double aid to Africa up to 2009. This was designed to demonstrate the growing importance of Africa by Chinese decision makers. For details see Ian Taylor, 'China's Oil Diplomacy in Africa', *International Affairs* 82, no. 5 (2006): 937–59; Anshan Li and April Funeka Yazini, *Forum on China-Africa Cooperation: The Politics of Human Resource Development* (Oxford: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2013).

⁵Ali Bilgic and Daniela Nascimento, 'Turkey's New Focus on Africa: Causes and Challenges', *NOREF Policy Brief*, no. 3 (2014).

⁶The event ended with the signing of The Istanbul Declaration on Turkey–Africa Partnership: Solidarity and Partnership for a Common Future.

⁷David Shinn, *Hizmet in Africa: The Activities and Significance of the Gülen Movement* (Los Angeles: Tsehai Publishers, 2015).

⁸Gabrielle Angey, 'Turkish Islam in Africa: A Study of the Gülen Movement in Kenya', *Institut français de recherche en Afrique* 10, no. 3 (2012).

After November 2014, when the second Turkey–Africa cooperation summit took place, under the theme of *the New model of partnership for the strengthening of sustainable development and integration*, Turkey revised its African agenda. A new phase was launched under the rubric *Turkey–Africa Partnership* initiative. This new strategy would further facilitate the consolidation of African ownership of African issues under the motto ‘African issues require African solutions’.⁹

1.2. The Horn of Africa – at the core of Turkish agenda

Since 2011, Turkey’s focus in Africa has been the Horn of Africa which represents an important crossroads of interests and conflicts. Poverty, underdevelopment, anarchy, political instability, corruption, and suppression of human and civil rights in general are the characteristic features of the region.¹⁰ The Horn of Africa is not only a gateway to the whole continent for the sale of Turkish goods, but from the new conservative elite’s outlook it is part of the Greater Middle East or the New Middle East.¹¹ From this perspective, the Horn of Africa includes the dynamics, tensions, and rivalries of Middle East geopolitics. Therefore, one can presume that Turkey aims to achieve two main goals: firstly, as an emerging middle power, Turkey seeks to expand its political influence to the detriment of regional rivals such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Iran; secondly, Turkey aspires to spread its interpretation of Islam in order to acquire a leading role within the Sunni world. Following these main objectives, Turkey has increased its efforts since 2008, to promote a new regional scenario in order to guarantee peace and stability, considered to be necessary conditions for any further development. The Ankara government acted first to consolidate existing bilateral ties with Ethiopia. Diplomatic relations with Ethiopia started in 1896 during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II, and Ethiopia still represents Turkey’s principal trading partner in the region.¹² In the Horn of Africa, Turkey’s engagement has been multifaceted: it has built major infrastructure projects, provided humanitarian assistance, financed scholarships, offered military training, facilitated political dialogue, supported institutional capacity building, and given budgetary aid. In order to tighten links with sub-Saharan countries, Turkey has followed an agenda in which non-state actors prevail by: (1) providing basic services in different fields (education, health, religion) through NGOs and other citizen-based organizations; (2) including businesspeople and other representatives of civil society in diplomatic delegations; (3) establishing an office of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA); (4) starting scheduled flights by Turkish Airlines; and (5)

⁹Federico Donelli and Ariel S. González Levaggi, ‘Becoming a Global Actor: The Turkish Agenda for the Global South’, *Rising Power Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (2016): 93–115.

¹⁰There are several works about the topic. For a general portrait from a security studies perspective, see Redie Bereketeab, *The Horn of Africa: Intra-state and Inter-state Conflicts and Security* (London: Pluto Press, 2013); Peter Woodward, *Crisis in the Horn of Africa: Politics, Piracy and The Threat of Terror* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2013).

¹¹While the term ‘the Broader Middle East’ has been officially accepted by NATO during the summit held in Istanbul on 28, 29 June 2004, the term the Greater Middle East has more commonly been used in the scientific literature and public opinion. The birth of the idea of ‘Greater’ Middle East during the Cold War see Roby Carol Barrett, *Greater Middle East and the Cold War and The US Foreign Policy Under Eisenhower and Kennedy* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007); about the current position in global politics see Mehdi Parvizi Amineh, *The Greater Middle East in Global Politics: Social Science Perspectives on the Changing Geography of the World Politics* (Leiden: Brill NV, 2007); about the effects of a new geographic imagination in middle eastern politics see Robert Harkavy, ‘Strategic Geography and the Greater Middle East’, *Naval War College Review* 54, no. 4 (2001): 36–53; Lawrence Rubin, *Islam in the Balance: Ideational Threats in Arab Politics* (Stanford: Stanford Security Studies, 2014).

¹²Turkey’s trade volume with Ethiopia jumped from \$40 million in 2003 to some \$4 billion in 2013.

opening an embassy and consulates. Through coordinated actions of state institutions and CSOs, this strategy and program has been replicated several times with different countries in the region, such as Ethiopia, Djibouti, Uganda, Sudan, Kenya, and Eritrea.

1.3. The involvement in the Somali crisis

Somalia holds a special place in Turkey's sub-Saharan engagement. Turkey's efforts in relation to Somalia have marked a real turning point in the Turkish approach to the continent. Turkey's rapprochement with Somalia formally began with the 2010 Istanbul Conference on Somalia as part of the Djibouti Agreement, a long-term political transition process that had started in 2004.¹³ However, the defining moment of Turkish commitment toward Somalia was the visit of the current President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan – at that time Prime Minister – during the Muslim Holy Month in 2011. Erdoğan was the first non-African leader to visit Somalia in nearly two decades. Erdoğan's visit had great political significance because it introduced the Somali situation into the international agenda, and paved the way for intergovernmental organizations' rapprochements with Somalia.¹⁴ Turkey has utilized its interventions in Somalia as 'showpieces' for its humanitarian clout throughout sub-Saharan Africa. They also underscored the material capabilities of Turkey as an emerging economy, tangibly demonstrated in terms of aid and trade assistance.¹⁵ Moreover, Erdoğan's trip also had two important effects: it showed the Turkish people Somalia's human tragedy, and it showed Somalia, where the feeling of being completely isolated from the international community was widespread, that they were not alone. For these reasons, the reopening of the Turkish Embassy in Mogadishu in November 2011 and the Turkish Airline's opening of the Istanbul-Khartoum-Mogadishu flight in March 2012 were very important. The presence of a diplomatic office and global infrastructure connections symbolized the reconnection of the country to the world community, and a step forward in its normalization process. At the political and intra-state level, Turkey supports national reconciliation and the preservation of the territorial integrity of the whole of Somalia.¹⁶ For that reason, Turkey promoted the strengthening of Somali Federal Government (SFG) institutions, concurrently seeking the involvement of other political entities through dialogue and bilateral meetings. Initially, some Somalis criticized Ankara's policy, considering it was too focused on Mogadishu and uncritically supportive of the SFG. However, over time, Turkey has expanded its activities into other areas, including Puntland and Somaliland, thus reducing its Mogadishu-centric reputation.¹⁷ Recently,

¹³The Djibouti Agreement was signed by representatives of Somalia's Transitional Federal Government and the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia at the end of the peace conference held in Djibouti between 31 May and 9 June 2008, with the mediation of the United Nations Special Envoy to Somalia, Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah. For more details see Theodore S. Dagne, 'Somalia: Prospects for a Lasting Peace', *Mediterranean Quarterly* 20, no. 2 (2009): 95–112.

¹⁴Somalis called Erdoğan's visit an 'icebreaker' and a few months after his trip, there was an official visit by UN Secretary Ban Ki Moon. See Rasna Wahara, 'Why Turkish aid model is proving to be a success in Somalia and elsewhere', *Africa Review*, April 2, 2012, <http://www.africareview.com/Opinion/Turkish-model-in-Somalia/-/979188/1378492/-/h0751tz/-/index.html> (accessed December 4, 2016).

¹⁵Mark Langan, 'Virtuous Power Turkey in sub-Saharan Africa: The "Neo-Ottoman" Challenge to the European Union', *Third World Quarterly* 38, no. 6 (2017): 1400.

¹⁶Federico Donelli, 'A Hybrid Actor in the Horn of Africa. An Analysis of Turkey's Involvement in Somalia', in *The Horn of Africa since the 1960s. Local and International Politics Intertwined*, ed. Aleksis Ylönen and Jan Záhorský (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 158–70.

¹⁷Ayşe S. Kadayıfci-Orellana, 'Turkish Mediation in Somalia for Peace and Stability', in *Turkey as a Mediator: Stories of Success and Failure*, ed. Doga Ulas Eralp (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2016).

Turkey strengthened its military presence by opening its largest-ever military base abroad in Mogadishu in May 2017. Even though this development is officially for strengthening Somali security in order to face the attacks by the radical Islamic group al-Shaabab,¹⁸ from a wider perspective, it is in line with a deep process of securitization of the whole Horn of Africa. Indeed, nowadays, Turkey faces regional competition from Iran and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The latter signed a deal with the Somaliland parliament in February 2017, allowing Abu Dahbi to open a military base in the port town of Berbera. The agreement came shortly after the expansion of UAE military presence in neighboring Eritrea, where it can count on a high number of military vessels and aircraft in the port of Assab.¹⁹

1.4. What are the main factors that drive Turkey's engagement?

Over the last decade, Turkish opening toward sub-Saharan countries has produced political and economic results, increasing the total trade volume²⁰ and raising Turkey's visibility throughout the whole continent. During these same years, through both its membership in international organizations and its own bilateral activism, Turkey has received increasing consent from the African people, as shown following the coup attempt of July 2016. There is a complex set of factors explaining why Turkish policy toward sub-Saharan Africa has changed over the past decade. Among these, the nascent role of middle and great emerging powers in the international political economy, next to the increasing presence of non-western actors such as China, India, South Korea, and Brazil in Africa, provide some clues to the state-to-system linkages. At the same time, the political economy has been changing toward a more open and profit-oriented one, naturally inclined to search out new markets beyond the traditional ones.²¹ Turkey, like other emerging powers, depends on a growing engagement with external markets to sustain its economic growth. Since 2008, Turkey has pursued material gains, such as increasing trade opportunities and investments, by convincing African states of their shared values and goals with Turkey.²² This has been the case in Turkey's growing economic relations with countries such as Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Angola, where the Ankara government has seen great potential – mostly in the textile, agricultural and construction sectors.²³ To sum up, the motives behind Turkey's opening toward sub-Saharan Africa are categorized in three interrelated dimensions: changes in the international and regional environment (external factors), economic interests, and foreign policy considerations (strategy, national role identity). More specifically,

¹⁸The al-Qaeda affiliated Islamic group Harakat al Shabaab (Al-Shabaab, 'the youth movement') still controls Somalia's southern districts. Al-Shabaab attacks, like the car bomb attack on the Turkish Embassy in Mogadishu in July 2013, have nourished doubts among Turkey's public about the involvement in the Somali crisis.

¹⁹Shazar Shafqat, 'UAE to Open Second Military Base in East Africa', *Middle East Eye*, February 13, 2017. <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/uae-eyes-military-expansion-eastern-africa-2028510672> (accessed March 22, 2017).

²⁰Turkey's trade volume grew threefold from \$5.4 billion in 2003 to \$19.5 billion in 2015. Turkey's trade volume with sub-Saharan Africa soared to \$6.6 billion in 2015 from around \$2.7 billion in 2005 (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs). <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey-africa-relations.en.mfa>

²¹Elvan Özdemira and Zehra Vildan Serin, 'Trading State and Reflections of Foreign Policy: Evidence from Turkish Foreign Policy', *Procedia Economics and Finance* 38 (2016): 468–75.

²²Umut Korkut and Ilke Civelekoglu, 'Becoming a Regional Power While Pursuing Material Gains: The Case of Turkish Interest in Africa', *International Journal* 68, no. 1 (2013): 187–203.

²³Robert Mason, 'Patterns and Consequences of Economic Engagement Across Sub-Sahara Africa: A Comparative Analysis of Chinese, British and Turkish Policies', *Working Paper Centre for International Studies* (CIS) (London: London School of Economics, 2015).

seven sets of reasons play an essential role in an explanatory framework: first, Turkey's difficulties in the EU accession process;²⁴ second, searching for new markets for Turkish products;²⁵ third, looking for greater operating autonomy from traditional Western allies in order to display Turkey's new pro-active strategy;²⁶ fourth, gaining political visibility and support for Turkey inside international and regional fora;²⁷ fifth, religious charitable duties;²⁸ sixth, serving as an area of Turkish foreign policy that has produced a general domestic consensus, and virtually no disagreement between the state, civil society and the business sector;²⁹ and, seventh, fostering sustainable economic development by imparting Turkey's managerial skills and technological know-how.³⁰

2. The Ankara consensus: spreading the Turkish formula

2.1. Turkey as a unique extra-regional actor

As described in the previous section, Turkey initially operated in Africa similarly to other non-western actors, focusing on economic development and humanitarian aid without concern for political issues. Until 2011, Turkey's engagement in Africa was included in the NEPAD³¹ international strategies, whose aim has been to bring development and stability through peacekeeping interventions under the auspices of the UN.³² Turkey used its membership in multilateral organizations and other international fora to reach out to Africa, gaining credibility in African eyes. Moreover, during the last 10 years, the Turkish government has positively welcomed being called an 'emerging donor',³³ because the status of being 'emerging', and thus increasingly significant and influential, plays a decisive role in Turkey's identity building as a self-confident international actor.³⁴ The turning point in Turkey's role in Africa was the commitment assumed in Somalia that led to a shift in its focus toward the political aspects of the region's problems. Indeed, since 2011 with its active involvement in the Somali crisis, Turkey has assumed more political responsibilities in the Horn of Africa, rather than being merely an economic power or donor country. This

²⁴Mehmet Özkan, 'What Drives Turkey's Involvement in Africa?', *Review of African Political Economy* 37, no. 126 (2010): 533–40; Langan, 'Virtuous Power Turkey'.

²⁵Mehmet Özkan, 'A New Actor or Passer-by? The Political Economy of Turkey's Engagement with Africa', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 14, no. 1 (2012): 113–33; Korkut and Civelekoglu, 'Becoming a Regional Power'.

²⁶Federico Donelli, 'Turkey's Presence in Somalia – A Humanitarian Approach', in *The Depth of Turkish geopolitics in the AKP's foreign policy: From Europe to an extended neighbourhood*, ed. Alessia Chiriatti, Emidio Diodato, Salih Dogan, Federico Donelli, and Bahri Yilmaz (Perugia: Università per Stranieri Perugia, 2015), 35–51.

²⁷Tom Wheeler, 'Ankara to Africa: Turkey's Outreach since 2005', *South African Journal of International Affairs* 18, no. 1 (2011): 43–62; Mehmet Özkan, 'A Post-2014 Vision for Turkey-Africa Relations', *Insight Turkey* 16, no. 4 (2014): 23–31.

²⁸Mehmet Özkan, "'Turkey's Religious and Socio-Political Depth in Africa" Emerging Powers in Africa', *LSE IDEAS Special Report* 16 (2013): 45–50; Savas Genc and Oguzhan Tekin, 'Turkey's Increased Engagement in Africa: The Potential, Limits and Future Perspective of Relations', *European Journal of Economic and Political Studies* 7, no. 1 (2014): 87–115.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Elem Eyrica Tepeciklioğlu, 'What is Turkey Doing in Africa? African Opening in Turkish Foreign Policy', *Centre for Policy and Research on Turkey (Research Turkey)* 4, no. 4 (2015): 95–106.

³¹The New Partnership for Africa's Development is an economic development program of the AU. Adopted in 2001, NEPAD aims to provide an overarching vision and policy framework for accelerating economic co-operation and integration among African countries. See www.nepad.org

³²Today Turkey is still committed to multilateral humanitarian assistance programs like the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Food Program (WFP).

³³According to the 2013 Global Humanitarian Assistance Report, Turkey – with a budget of \$1 billion for humanitarian assistance – ranked as the fourth-largest humanitarian aid donor of the Official development assistance (ODA) in 2012, after the US, the EU, and the United Kingdom.

³⁴Andrea Binder, Claudia Meier, and Julia Steets, 'Humanitarian Assistance: Truly Universal?'. A Mapping Study of Non-Western Donors', *Global Public Policy Institute Research Paper* (Berlin: Global Public Policy Institute, 2010).

change has made Turkey a unique extra-regional actor because it combines the traditional political-stability perspective of western powers with the economic-trade perspective of emerging ones.³⁵ Ankara has been careful to distance itself from both the traditional donors, especially those associated with colonialism in Africa, and from relative newcomers to the continent whose main interests are economic.³⁶

2.2. A mixed paradigm: the Ankara consensus

Compared with traditional powers, Turkey displays features in its relations with African countries divided into two sets of traits: ideational and practical. The practical dimension is analyzed in the next paragraph and has been displayed in the multitrack policy. The ideational dimension can be discerned by the absence of a colonial past, which makes possible a 'clean slate'³⁷ approach,³⁸ the existence of historical ties,³⁹ and the presence of religious bonds.⁴⁰ Whereas the historical past is an obstacle for western powers, Turkey is able to emphasize its imperial past and use it to retrieve old historical and identity links.⁴¹ Significantly, in terms of Turkish relations with the Global South moreover, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) foreign policy elite have stressed that the Ottoman Empire never engaged in the full-fledged colonialism of European powers. Indeed, the relationship between the Ottoman centre and its peripheral zones is instead set forth as having been one of consent, anchored by cultural ties between fellow Muslims as part of a pax-Ottomana.⁴² As pointed out by Mark Langan, in the Global South the 'neo-Ottoman identity is presented as a benevolent force in contrast to Western hegemony, within an "anti-colonial" narrative'.⁴³ At the core of this idea, Turkey presents itself as the continent's natural partner, untainted by a colonial past, promoting a kind of Ankara consensus. Even though it is not a well-defined concept, the Ankara consensus can be conceived of as a new model for economic, political and social development of the African countries, alternative to both the so-called Washington consensus⁴⁴ – US and European dominated neo-liberal economic and developmental discourse – and the

³⁵Özkan, 'Turkey's Religious', 50.

³⁶Mahad Wasuge, *Turkey's Assistance Model in Somalia: Achieving Much with Little* (Mogadishu: Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, 2016), 10; Brendon J. Cannon, 'Deconstructing Turkey's Efforts in Somalia', *Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies* 16, no. 14 (2016): 98–123.

³⁷The term has been quoted by former President Abdullah Gül during a visit to Africa. By 'clean slate', Gül was presumably alluding to the crucial fact that Turkey has never been a colonizing power in the region.

³⁸Ali Abdurahman, 'Turkey's Foray into Africa: A New Humanitarian Power?', *Insight Turkey* 13, no. 4 (2013): 65–73; Volkan İpek and Gonca Biltekin, 'Turkey's Foreign Policy Implementation in sub-Saharan Africa: A Post-international Approach', *New Perspective on Turkey* 49 (2013): 121–56.

³⁹Turkish leader emphasizes these historical ties: 'You are home, Turkey is your motherland, sixteenth century Ahmed Gurey fought occupying forces with Ottoman support'. 'Opening Remarks by Foreign Minister of Turkey Ahmet Davutoğlu', Somali Civil Society Gathering, Istanbul, 27 May 2012. See Kateřina Rudincová, 'New Player on the Scene: Turkish Engagement in Africa', *Bulletin of Geography. Socio-economic Series* 25 (2014): 197–213.

⁴⁰Sıradag Abdurrahim, 'Benevolence or Selfishness: Understanding the Increasing Role of Turkish NGOs and Civil Society in Africa', *Insight on Africa* 7, no. 1 (2015): 1–20; Brendon J. Cannon, 'Turkey in Africa: Lessons in Political Economy', *Florya Chronicles of Political Economy* 3, no. 1 (2017): 93–110.

⁴¹For example, former Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu explained the importance of Somalia for Turkish interests by underlining the Ottoman expeditions to that country during the sixteenth century. He stated that 'We have inherited these [relations] from the Ottomans'. Bilgic and Nascimento, 'Turkey's New Focus', 2.

⁴²Lerna K. Yanik, 'Constructing Turkish "exceptionalism": Discourses of Liminality and Hybridity in post-Cold War Turkish Foreign Policy', *Political Geography* 30, no. 2 (2011): 80–9.

⁴³Langan, 'Virtuous Power Turkey', 1403.

⁴⁴For the Washington consensus see John Williamson, 'What Washington means by policy reform', in *Latin American Readjustment: How Much has Happened*, ed. John Williamson (Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, 1989);

most recent Beijing consensus as state-led economic growth and prioritization of stability over democracy.⁴⁵ In spite of the neo-liberal model remaining the most appreciated and followed by African leaders, a broader crisis of confidence in it, particularly after the 2008 financial crisis, has paved the way for the rise of the Chinese one.⁴⁶ China is now the dominant player in some African states due to its extra-market decision making, partly based on Africa's abundant natural resources.⁴⁷ Turkey has attempted to promote a middle way, or a third way, through the implementation of a win-win policy in Africa which includes peace-building efforts and a policy of mutual empowerment. At the same time, Ankara's idea neither refuses nor denies benefits and opportunities of global capitalism. Therefore, Turkey seeks to share with African countries its own development paradigm or formula that has proved successful in its own rapid economic growth.⁴⁸ Rather than creating new relations of dependence – as the traditional actors, including China, tend to do – Turkey's approach, particularly in states like Somalia, tends to focus on political equality, mutual economic development, and a long-term social partnership. As pointed out by Brendon Cannon, Turkey has shown less interest in an attempt to craft expensive, long-term solutions that are short on detail and involve the usual suspects of foreign-funded civil society organizations, NGOs, and consultancies. These result in conferences and policy papers but rarely offer anything concrete such as medical facilities or roads⁴⁹.

Although Turkey does not categorize itself as a member of the Global South, its narratives and ways of working are similar to them.⁵⁰ Turkey's approach has several components ascribable to the SSC.⁵¹ Indeed, the philosophy behind the SSC emerges from the notion of mutual growth, and the underlying principle is to support each other for a win-win partnership on all sides.⁵² The main tenets of Turkish assistance efforts reportedly have much in common with the principles of SSC: respect for national ownership, mutual benefit, solidarity, context-specific and demand-driven assistance.⁵³ Fostering

Arno Tausch, 'Social Cohesion, Sustainable Development and Turkey's Accession to the European Union: Implications from a Global Model', *Turkish Journal of International Relations* 2, no. 1 (2003): 1–41.

⁴⁵For the Beijing consensus see Joshua Cooper Ramo, *The Beijing Consensus, Notes on the New Physics of Chinese Power* (London: Foreign Policy Centre, 2004); Ronald I. McKinnon, 'China in Africa: The Washington Consensus versus the Beijing Consensus', *International Finance* 13, no. 3 (2010): 495–506; Ewelina Lubieniecka, 'Chinese Engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa: Can the Beijing Consensus be Explained under World-systems Analysis?', *Fudan Journal of the Humanities & Social Sciences* 7, no. 3 (2014): 433–50.

⁴⁶S. Philip Hsu, Yu-Shan Wu, and Suisheng Zhao, eds., *In Search of China's Developmental Model: Beyond the Beijing Consensus* (Milton Park: Routledge, 2011); Lekorwe Mogopodi, Anyway Chingwete, Mina Okuru, and Romaric Samson, 'China's Growing Presence in Africa Wins Largely Positive Popular Reviews', *Afrobarometer Dispatch*, Afrobarometer 2016.

⁴⁷Joshua Eisenman, 'China – Africa Trade Patterns: Causes and Consequences', *Journal of Contemporary China* 21, no. 7 (2012): 793–810.

⁴⁸This approach recalled what Turkey tried to do in the neighboring countries of the Middle East region before the Arab upheavals of 2011. See André Bank and Roy Karadag, 'The "Ankara Moment": The Politics of Turkey's Regional Power in the Middle East, 2007–11', *Third World Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (2013): 287–304.

⁴⁹Cannon, 'Turkey in Africa', 99.

⁵⁰Gizem Sucuoğlu and Jason Stearns, *Turkey in Somalia: Shifting Paradigms of Aid* (Johannesburg: Research Report South African Institute of International Affairs, 2016).

⁵¹The term refers to technical cooperation, knowledge exchange, and financial assistance between pairs of developing countries. Moreover, the aid of emerging donors is frequently not labelled 'aid' but, rather, as a form of South-South cooperation, which differs from Western aid because of its lack of conditionality and its 'untied' nature. Ngaire Woods, 'Whose Aid? Whose Influence? China, Emerging Donors and the Silent Revolution in Development Assistance', *International Affairs* 84, no. 6 (2008): 1205–21; Paolo de Renzio and Jurek Seifert, 'South–South cooperation and the future of development assistance: mapping actors and options', *Third World Quarterly* 35, no. 10 (2014): 1860–75, 1864.

⁵²Fahimul Quadir, 'Rising Donors and the New Narrative of "South–South" Cooperation: What Prospects for Changing the Landscape of Development Assistance Programmes?', *Third World Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (2013): 321–38.

⁵³Hakan Fidan and Rahman Nurdun, 'Turkey's Role in the Global Development Assistance Community: The Case of TICA (Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency)', *Southern Europe & the Balkans* 10, no. 1 (2008): 93–

self-reliance and sustainability has been declared as one of the most important objectives of Turkish aid to sub-Saharan Africa. Turkey has tried to portray itself as an active partner for development assistance, this latter being among Turkey's soft power strategies in recent years. In contrast to other emerging non-western powers following the SSC approach that are active in Africa, Turkey includes a religious meaning to its assistance. Most of the works carried out by its NGOs⁵⁴ are promoted as Islamic duties.⁵⁵ Turkey gives a religious dimension to its assistance and, following the Arab model of development aid, concentrates on African Muslim communities.⁵⁶ This is the case in Somalia, which is a member of the Arab League and, as well as Turkey, is also a member of the OIC. The religious ties are an important part of Turkey's rapprochement with Africa, but it should not be overestimated. Religion appears as a tool rather than the driving force in most Turkish initiatives.⁵⁷ Additionally, it is perceived as a legitimate basis for Turkey's involvement.⁵⁸ On one hand religion is an element of legitimacy to foster a reliable image, on the other hand it could constitute a dimension of tension and even dispute with both local groups and other extra-regional actors. Indeed, growing rivalries among Sunni factions have fertile ground in a region populated in the majority by Muslims adhering to the Shafi'i *madhhab* (Islamic schools of jurisprudence), different from the Turkish one (Hanafi) and closer to the Gulf monarchies (Hanbali).

Another important feature of Turkey's agenda is its adherence to the principle of non-conditionality in its support for African countries.⁵⁹ By refraining from imposing political conditions, Turkey demonstrates that it is able to engage with recipient governments in a spirit of solidarity while not sacrificing effectiveness and efficiency.⁶⁰ Moreover, Turkey has taken political and security risks by eliminating middlemen and directly delivering its aid to beneficiaries, in cooperation with national and local providers. This kind of approach is not immune to the costs and collateral effects similar to those experienced by other donors, as for example, the rampant corruption on both the part of donor

111; Haşimi Cemalettin, 'Turkey's Humanitarian Diplomacy and Development Cooperation', *Insight Turkey* 16, no. 1 (2014): 127–45; Andrea Binder, 'The Shape and Sustainability of Turkey's Booming Humanitarian Assistance', *Revue Internationale de Politique de Développement* 5, no. 2 (2014). Ziya Öniş and Mustafa Kutlay, 'The Dynamics of Emerging Middle-power Influence in Regional and Global Governance: The Paradoxical Case of Turkey', *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 71, no. 2 (2017): 164–83.

⁵⁴ Almost all Turkish humanitarian NGOs that operate in Africa are faith-based organizations. They are formal organizations whose identity and mission are self-consciously derived from the teachings of one or more religious or spiritual traditions. See Julia Berger, 'Religious Nongovernmental Organizations: An Exploratory Analysis', *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 14, no. 1 (2003): 15–39, 16; Nihat Çelik and Emre İşeri, 'Islamically Oriented Humanitarian NGOs in Turkey: AKP Foreign Policy Parallelism', *Turkish Studies* 17, no. 3 (2016): 429–48; Genc and Tekin, 'Turkey's Increased Engagement'.

⁵⁵ Özkan, 'Turkey's Religious', 48.

⁵⁶ Arab aid is distinct from the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) model, as it remains primarily concentrated regionally and is more openly influenced by social solidarity and religious ties. Arab solidarity, especially in the early years of foreign assistance, was a primary objective. Arab donors have expanded to sub-Saharan Africa. This may be partially influenced by the goal of Afro-Arab unity. For further details see Eric Neumayer, *What factors determine the allocation of aid by Arab countries and multilateral agencies?* (London: LSE Research Online, 2003); Felix Zimmermann and Kimberly Smith, 'More Actors, More Money, More Ideas for International Development Co-operation', *Journal of International Development* 23, no. 5 (2011): 722–38.

⁵⁷ Donelli, 'A Hybrid Actor'.

⁵⁸ Tepeciklioğlu, 'What is Turkey Doing?'

⁵⁹ The application of clear political and economic conditionalities in aid and assistance to push for normative principles and values, especially in human rights, is one area of divergence between more traditional donors and non-traditional aid providers.

⁶⁰ Gizem Sucuoğlu and Onur Sazak, 'The New Kid on the Block: Turkey's Shifting Approaches to Peacebuilding', *Rising Powers Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (2016): 69–91, 73.

nation and donor recipient.⁶¹ However, it fits well with the vision 'African solutions to African problems' that is promoted by a new generation of African leaders and the AU in the last two decades.⁶² Furthermore, Turkey's African policy pays lip service to a normative element, on behalf of a more egalitarian world politics, fostered by the narrative of Turkish officials during their visits. By criticizing the development policies of traditional donors, Turkey distances itself from them, emphasizing the novelty of its approach based on a mutually beneficial and sustainable partnership between donor and recipients.⁶³ During the 2015 Sustainable Development Summit, former Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu brought forward the sub-Saharan Africa Turkish policy as an example of the driving force for the positive outputs resulting from combining humanitarian and development assistance programs within a collective strategy.

2.3. Understanding the narrative behind the Ankara consensus

The Ankara consensus is emphasized by the narrative that backs up Turkish activism, strengthening the perception of Turkey as a unique actor in the sub-Saharan context. The Turkish south-south narrative is blended with faith-based elements, humanitarianism, and some references to a particular kind of Third-Worldism.

2.4. South-South

Even though traditionally its sights have been focused on the West – and thus, considered to be close to the global North – Turkey is aware of its position between the North and the South due also to the strong identity/security nexus that has characterized its developmental path. Therefore, like other emerging powers, Turkey refuses to use the dominant language of official development, which tends to rationalize the hierarchical relationship between North and South.⁶⁴ Furthermore, Turkey displays such rhetoric in every bilateral and multilateral meeting in which it emphasizes that the Turkish goal is to help the African nations in their policy of 'African solutions to African problems'. In spite of this strong SSC rhetoric, Turkey's South-South credentials have not proven to be fully reliable.

2.5. Humanitarianism

In a global context, Turkey's humanitarian-oriented approach is used as a way to live up to the expectations of international solidarity and problem-solving initiatives that come with the status of being a rising power. Since 2008, Turkey's humanitarian diplomacy has grown

⁶¹Carl. J.W. Schudel, 'Corruption and Bilateral Aid: A Dyadic Approach', *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 52, no. 4 (2008): 507–28.

⁶²For an overview about the African solution, see Mammo Muchie, Phindil Lukhele-Olorunju, and Oghenerobor B. Akpor, eds., *The African Union Ten Years After. Solving African Problems with Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance* (Oxford: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2013), 143–55.

⁶³Teri Murphy and Auveen Elizabeth Woods, *Turkey's International Development Framework Case Study: Somalia* (Istanbul: Istanbul Policy Center, 2014), 10.

⁶⁴Axel Dreher, Peter Nunnenkamp, and Rainer Thiele, 'Are "New" Donors Different? Comparing the Allocation of Bilateral Aid Between nonDAC and DAC Donor Countries', *World Development* 39, no. 11 (2011): 1950–68.

and its reputation as a humanitarian state rings louder over all sub-Saharan Africa.⁶⁵ For the Turkish government, humanitarian aid was and still is a means to strengthen bilateral relations with governments.⁶⁶ The religious element is especially evident in the humanitarian dimension of Turkish efforts. Indeed, during the last decade, Turkey's humanitarianism aimed to restore the bond between Turkey and Muslim countries, and it was articulated in relation to a perceived Turkish responsibility toward Muslim communities outside of its borders (the *ummah*). In recent years, however, this *ummah* focus has been replaced by an Islamic internationalism that suggests having cross-border humanitarian engagement as a vessel of Islamic religious identity.⁶⁷ Theoretically it means that even though Turkish NGOs do not discriminate on the basis of religion and ethnic origin in their aid activities, a strong Islamic identity shapes their approach to their actions.⁶⁸ The main limit of this discourse is that this image of a moral state, which Turkey has fed in the international arena, is a mismatch with the decreasing level of democratic standards within the country following the coup attempt of mid-2016.

2.6. Third-Worldism

Finally, a sort of Turkish Third-Worldism is traceable to the revision project of global – political and economic – governance institutions and structures, and in particular to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.⁶⁹ In some circumstances, Turkey's rhetoric seems very harsh against globalization, considering it as a new form of Western colonialism and modern slavery,⁷⁰ but it is more related to the current anti-Western domestic political discourse rather than true belief. Such discourse does not go against the globalization process and its economic and financial effects, as in the positions of the traditional post-Marxist wave, but it implies a broader and deep criticism of international governance. Yet, this rhetoric does not reflect the nature of traditional Third World⁷¹ political movements such as the non-aligned movement or the G-77. In spite of the last six years, where Turkey has been trying to become elected to a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council – after its successful bid of 2008 – it has been increasingly critical of the UN, labeling the

⁶⁵Federico Donelli, 'Turkey's Presence in Somalia a Humanitarian Approach', in *The Depth of Turkish Geopolitics in the AKP's foreign policy: From Europe to an extended neighbourhood*, ed. Alessia Chiriatti, Emidio Diodato, Salih Dogan, Federico Donelli, and Bahri Yilmaz (Perugia: Università per Stranieri Perugia, 2015), 35–51.

⁶⁶Abdirahman, 'Turkey's Foray'.

⁶⁷Senem Cevik, *The Rise of NGOs: Islamic Faith Diplomacy* (Los Angeles: USC Center on Public Diplomacy, 2014).

⁶⁸Nihat Çelik and Emre İşeri, 'Islamically Oriented Humanitarian NGOs in Turkey: AKP Foreign Policy Parallelism', *Turkish Studies* 17, no. 3 (2016): 435–36.

⁶⁹A point that was strongly claimed by President Erdoğan during the Turkey–Africa Business and Economic Forum in Istanbul:

In the name of globalization, one growth model has been dictated to different countries. If you want to grow your economy, you need to find the IMF, the World Bank, or an interest rate hike. You cannot go beyond the limits they set for you in the infrastructure projects and defence industry. You must obey the definition of democracy.

Baffour Ankomah, 'Turkey and Africa Pledge Co-operation', *New African*, December 20, 2016. About the Turkey-Africa Business and Economic Forum see <http://www.turkeyafricaforum.org/>.

⁷⁰Editorial, 'Globalization New Form of Colonialism, President Erdoğan Says', *Daily Sabah* (online), November 2, 2016, <https://www.dailysabah.com/economy/2016/11/02/globalization-new-form-of-colonialism-president-erdogan-says> (accessed April 24, 2017).

⁷¹By 'Third World' I mean states in Asia, Africa, Latin American, and the Caribbean, and other regions that were either full colonies or semi-colonies of Western powers. See *Third World Security in the Post-Cold War Era*, ed. Meryl A. Kessler and Thomas G. Weiss (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1991).

intergovernmental organization body as 'unfair'. President Erdoğan and other Turkish senior diplomats use the ethical discourse based on the notion 'the world is greater than five' that finds strong resonance in Africa. This narrative represents a radical critique of the existing status quo in the international system that is inspired by the notions of global good and responsibility. As pointed out by Senem Çevik and Philip Seib, from the Turkish perspective the concept of global governance 'draws its conceptual framework from the guiding principles of achieving inclusivity and outreach'.⁷² The call to reform the architecture and representation mechanism of the UN carries a strong message to African leaders and people. At the same time, this anti-systemic discourse is connected to the increasing isolation the Ankara government has faced in the post-Arab Spring era.⁷³

According to Özcan and Orakci, thanks to such discourse, together with the horizontal win-win partnership and humanitarian-oriented policy, 'Turkey has been able to handle the distrust and the suspicion present in several African countries during the opening period'.⁷⁴ However, despite Turkey's relatively non-Western image in Africa, based on its non-colonial past, as well as its historical, religious and cultural ties with the continent increasing its legitimacy, it is still a non-African state. This situation may create a perception that Turkey is attempting to cultivate an international image by using Africa's vulnerabilities.⁷⁵

3. Operationalizing Turkey's multitrack policy

Turkey's multitrack approach to Africa separates it from other extra-regional actors. The term multitrack diplomacy was popularized by Kumar Rupesinghe and refers to the contributions of a variety of actors at different levels of a conflict that work together effectively to attain peace. It includes official diplomacy but also incorporates a variety of actors such as international institutions, regional organizations, NGOs, civic organizations, religious organizations the business community, and the media among others. The multitrack diplomacy concept asserts that the individual efforts of a variety of actors can complement each other and combine to form a larger framework of preventive action.⁷⁶ Alternatively, multitrack diplomacy has been described as a web of interconnected parts – activities, individuals, institutions, communities – that operate together for a common goal.⁷⁷ In the Turkish foreign policy lexicon, the concept of multitrack is a synonym for multidimensionality, which indicates the ability to operate on different levels and on different fronts, from 'official' diplomatic relations, within international and regional organizations, to transnational people to people relations developed by non-state actors.⁷⁸ It means an approach of

⁷²Senem Çevik and Philip Seib eds., *Turkey's Public Diplomacy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), Introduction.

⁷³Bilgin Ayata, 'Turkish Foreign Policy in a Changing Arab World: Rise and Fall of a Regional Actor?', *Journal of European Integration* 37, no. 1 (2015): 95–112.

⁷⁴Mehmet Ozkan and Serhat Orakci, 'Viewpoint: Turkey as a "political" Actor in Africa – An Assessment of Turkish Involvement in Somalia', *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 9, no. 2 (2015): 343–52.

⁷⁵Pinar Akpınar, 'Turkey's Peacebuilding in Somalia: The Limits of Humanitarian Diplomacy', *Turkish Studies* 14, no. 4 (2013): 735–57, 751.

⁷⁶Kumar Rupesinghe, *The General Principles of Multi-track Diplomacy* (Durban: ACCORD, 1997).

⁷⁷Louise Diamond and John W. McDonald, *Multi-track Diplomacy: A Systems Approach to Peace* (Washington, DC: Kumarian Press, 1997).

⁷⁸During the Fourth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries held in Istanbul in 2011, Davutoğlu stressed the importance of CSO as a valuable tool for bringing global peace and stability. He stressed that they are an integral part of international relations and that Turkey believes strong civil society can grow only through heavy state support, saying 'this is why we [the AKP government] strongly support civil society organizations participating in

coordination between Turkish state and civil society aid agencies.⁷⁹ Turkish multitrack policy has some characteristics that make Turkey's involvement in the region original and unique. Among these features it is possible to highlight: bilateral engagement, multi-stakeholders, activities coordination and direct delivering of aid.

3.1. Bilateral engagement

The multitrack policy highlights that alongside Turkey's growing presence in the major supranational organizations of the last decade, there has been a gradual widening of the foreign policy tools, with the opening of the policy implementation process to a new set of actors.⁸⁰ Therefore, as Pinar Akpınar argued, Turkish foreign policy in the preceding decade has changed from a single-track policy and diplomacy, in which the state – official bureaucracy and the military – was the single primary actor, to a multitrack diplomacy, in which numerous actors have become influential.⁸¹ This development has also encouraged Turkey to shift its aid and assistance approach from multilateral to a more bilateral one. Indeed, traditionally, and until the mid-2000s, Turkey preferred to deliver assistance to African countries through multilateral channels. However, a robust shift has been observed since the second half of the last decade from multilateral actions toward a bilateral engagement.⁸² Even though bilateral engagement with the recipient countries has a number of limits, for example, it lacks a reliable monitoring model to evaluate the impact of specific projects and programs, it has various and significant advantages. Indeed, it presents the aid provider with the opportunity to better understand, directly engage, and build relationships with the national and local actors on the ground.⁸³ For emerging extra-regional actors, such as Turkey, with high aspirations of becoming an influential player in the areas of humanitarian assistance, development aid, and political stability, bilateral delivery of aid ensures more visibility than is otherwise obtained via multilateral modes of engagement.⁸⁴ The flip side of this autonomy in bilateral engagement is the lack of coordination and cooperation with other donors. This is a weak point in Turkish policy. Indeed, Turkey has often failed to coordinate with traditional donors, creating situations with duplication of activities.⁸⁵

3.2. Multi-stakeholder

A pivotal role in fostering the trust-building process on the ground has been played by non-state actors. From the beginning, Turkey's activities in sub-Saharan Africa were

international affairs'. Editorial, 'Davutoğlu Says Civil Society Key in Development of LDCs', *Sunday Zaman*, May 8, 2011, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-243200-Davutoğlu-says-civil-society-key-in-development-of-ldcs.html> (accessed April 1, 2017).

⁷⁹Cannon, 'Deconstructing Turkey's Efforts', 115.

⁸⁰Birgül Demirtaş, 'Turkey and the Balkans: Overcoming Prejudices, Building Bridges and Constructing a Common Future', *Perceptions – Journal of International Affairs* 18, no. 2 (2013): 163–84; Çelik and İşeri, 'Islamically Oriented'.

⁸¹Pinar Akpınar, 'Turkey Peacebuilding in Somalia: The Limits of Humanitarian Diplomacy', in *Turkey's Rise as an Emerging Power*, ed. Paul Kubicek, Emel Parlar Dal, and Tarık Oğuzlu (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 2015).

⁸²The multilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) accounted for 2% of Turkey's total ODA in 2014, as opposed to 44% in 2004. See <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/turkeys-official-development-assistanceoda.htm> (accessed March 17, 2017).

⁸³Sucuoğlu and Sazak, 'The New Kid', 74.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, 75.

⁸⁵Fuat Keyman and Onur Sazak, 'Turkey as a "Humanitarian State"', *POMEAS Paper*, no. 2 (2014): 11; Jeannine Hausmann and Erik Lundsgaarde, *Turkey's Role in Development Cooperation* (Tokyo: UNU Centre for Policy Research, 2015), 4.

immediately distinguished by a sudden increase in Turkish public and private stakeholders – such as religious groups, NGOs, community groups and other forms of citizen-based entities – and by their close cooperation with their African counterparts.⁸⁶ As a result, there has been an increase in Turkey's civilian capacity through the involvement of non-state actors in the policy-making process, and on the ground.⁸⁷ For instance, Turkey's engagement in Somalia, from the outset, has combined political, developmental, economic, and humanitarian support, and has brought together a variety of actors – government officials, aid agencies, CSO, religious organizations, municipalities, and the private sector.⁸⁸ These organizations often build relations with their counterparts from the recipient country, turning disparate peace and development processes in priority countries into a uniquely inclusive, participatory process.⁸⁹

To encourage the growing involvement of Turkish non-state actors, a change was necessary in the Turkish geographical imagination of both its own country, today conceived as an Afro-Eurasian state, and of Africa, no longer considered as a poor and backward place but as a fecund ground full of opportunities.⁹⁰ Therefore, Turkey's opening to Africa has also had profound psychological effects first and foremost on Turkish society. At the same time, one of the main incentives to turn toward Africa came from below, from civil society. In a short time, the Turkish public has become increasingly aware of the many African issues, particularly relating to long-ignored sub-Saharan countries, creating a general interest for the region.⁹¹ Despite the fact that this growing consciousness has not yet translated into knowledge in-depth of the African societies and people, it has developed a widespread sensitivity to African problems. This trend is revealed by the wide public support for fundraisers and relief goods collections allocated to African countries. The attention is usually promoted by citizens-based organizations. In some cases, these have preceded the official political initiatives. For instance, in the summer of 2011, a widespread campaign in Turkey, led by NGOs such as the Human Relief Foundation (IHH), *Deniz Feneri Derneği* and *Cansuyu* Charity, made a considerable contribution by finding substantial resources for relief efforts with a flow of over \$365 million in humanitarian aid.⁹² Recently, in the spring of 2017, the state-owned Turkish Airlines, the only airline that flies to Mogadishu, has backed the campaign *#TurkishAirlinesHelpSomalia*,⁹³ as an attempt to draw worldwide attention to the famine in the Somali peninsula. The campaign has had the merit of highlighting the famine crisis in Somalia and, at the same time, slyly reaffirming Turkish presence in the Horn of Africa. People's participation and feelings have

⁸⁶Kathryn Achilles, Sazak, Onur, Thomas Woods Wheeler, and Auveen Elizabeth, *Turkish Aid Agencies in Somalia. Risks and Opportunities for Building Peace* (Istanbul: Istanbul Saferworld and Istanbul Policy Center, 2015).

⁸⁷Gaye Aslı Sancar, 'Turkey's Public Diplomacy: Its Actors, Stakeholders, and Tools', in *Turkey's Public Diplomacy*, ed. Senem Çevik and Philip Seib (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 13–42.

⁸⁸Donelli, 'Turkey's Presence in Somalia'.

⁸⁹Sucuoğlu and Sazak, 'The New Kid', 76.

⁹⁰Gökhan Bacik and İsa Afacan, 'Turkey Discovers sub-Saharan Africa: The Critical Role of Agents in the Construction of Turkish Foreign-Policy Discourse', *Turkish Studies* 14, no. 3 (2013): 483–502.

⁹¹Mehmet Özkan, 'Turkey's Rising Role'.

⁹²Editorial, 'Assessing Turkey's Role in Somalia', *Policy Briefing – Africa Briefing*, no. 92, October 2012, [http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/horn-of-africa/somalia/b092-assessing-turkeys-role-in-somalia.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/africa/horn-of-africa/somalia/b092-assessing-turkeys-role-in-somalia.pdf) (accessed March 8, 2017).

⁹³The Twitter hashtag *#TurkishAirlinesHelpSomalia* was launched by a French social media celebrity Jerome Jerre. See Sarah Lansdown, 'Turkish Airlines to Send Supplies to Somalia after Social Media Campaign', *Huffington Post*, March 20, 2017, http://www.huffingtonpost.com.au/2017/03/19/turkish-airlines-to-send-supplies-to-somalia-after-social-media_a_21902874 (accessed April 12, 2017).

made all these campaigns somewhat of a domestic issue for both Turkish government and society. Many Turkish people feel a deep sense of obligation to help the suffering ones by donating money or helping on the ground as humanitarian, medical, and teaching staff.⁹⁴ However, it should be noted that such funding campaigns are usually indirectly promoted by the state, engage only a part of the Turkish public and are only for a limited period of time, following a specific agenda and foreign policy priorities.

3.3. Activities coordination

Peace-building and mediation literature explains how citizen-based activities can be very effective in the arduous process of trust-building and in creating a space for dialogue in both conflict and non-conflict scenarios.⁹⁵ Every initiative has a limited but critical impact, and to be effective must be combined with other efforts.⁹⁶ In other words, there must be coordination among the different actors involved in the field. In the Turkish case, an institutional framework provides broad coordination, at the top of which are both the Prime Minister's Office (The Disaster and Management Presidency, AFAD) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. CSO and their actions enjoy support from the state institutional framework. At the same time, they can count on full financial independence. The state's role is in the form of indirect support, that is, it provides the necessary legal authorizations and logistical support. On the ground, TİKA plays the main role. TİKA is the official state body of the ODA which is linked to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). TİKA represents an operative branch of Ankara's government with the aim of paving the way for public and private initiatives in three main areas: humanitarian aid, assistance in the development of the country and making financial investments to consolidate business.⁹⁷ In the field, TİKA is the pivot of all public and private initiatives. In addition to various ministries – such as the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Ministry of National Education and Technological Research Council of Turkey, a notable commitment is also provided by the Turkish Red Crescent (*Kızılay*), the largest charity in Turkey.⁹⁸

In sub-Saharan African countries, Turkey concentrates primarily on four areas: health, education, infrastructure, and the establishment of institutional buildings. In terms of development, state agencies such as the Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey (DEİK) and the Turkish Exporters Assembly (TİM) are cooperating with several private organizations. Among the latter, the Islamic-oriented business association MÜSİAD is active through promotions of fora between Turkish entrepreneurs and their African counterparts – stressing common economic goals, and at the same time exploiting the religious dimension, which is perceived as a legitimate basis for Turkey's involvement.⁹⁹

⁹⁴Wasuge, 'Turkey's Assistance Model', 4.

⁹⁵See for example Charles Webel and Johan Galtung, eds., *Handbook of Peace and Conflict Studies* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007); Roger Mac Ginty, ed., *Routledge Handbook of Peacebuilding* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013).

⁹⁶Kumar Rupesinghe and Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, *Civil Wars, Civil Peace. An Introduction to Conflict Resolution* (London: Pluto Press, 1998), 115–16.

⁹⁷Güner Özkan and Mustafa Turgut Demirtepe, 'Transformation of a Development Aid Agency: TİKA in a Changing Domestic and International Setting', *Turkish Studies* 13, no. 4 (2012): 647–67.

⁹⁸Neil Ford, 'Turkey's Soft Power Play', *African Business*, no. 429 (2016): 49–51; Genc and Tekin, 'Turkey's Increased Engagement'.

⁹⁹Umut Korkut and Ilke Civelekoglu, 'Becoming a Regional Power While Pursuing Material Gains: The Case of Turkish Interest in Africa', *International Journal* 68, no. 1 (2013): 187–203, 195.

Indeed, Turkey's businessmen frequently present Islam as the unifying bond between Africa and Turkey in order to gain advantage over their competitors.¹⁰⁰ The presence of non-state actors (NGOs, charities, and businesses) in cooperation with the official diplomacy (ministries and state institutions) on the ground fosters interpersonal dialogue and engagement with local actors. Such a coordinated approach is particularly useful in crisis situations as well as in post-conflict scenarios like Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan since it helps to foster the inclusiveness of all local parties and increase mutual trust.

3.4. Direct delivery of aid

Nowadays, the modus operandi of many conventional aid providers, is to nestle their representatives in a 'security bubble' from their first day of training at headquarters all the way to the fortresses of their field offices in host countries.¹⁰¹ As demonstrated by Mark Duffield, this securitization of assistance and heavily guarded compounds segregates development and peace-building actors from the very populations whose needs and interests they are there to prioritize.¹⁰² In areas of heightened insecurity like Afghanistan and Somalia, there has emerged a technique known as *remote management* which means that international aid managers manage projects at a distance, in some cases never visiting them at all.¹⁰³ For example, Dubai has become a base for aid operations in Afghanistan. By contrast, in high-intensity conflict and counterinsurgency contexts like Syria, Afghanistan and Somalia, Turkish government personnel and CSO take pride in being present on the ground, and delivering aid directly without using secondary channels.¹⁰⁴ For instance, in the Somali context, Turkey's decision to operate from Mogadishu, while most of the foreign NGOs operate from Nairobi, has improved knowledge of the environment, and given Turks the opportunity to explore the Somali market and aid dynamics first-hand.¹⁰⁵ Turkey's presence on the ground, through the direct aid mechanism, has increased its popularity among officials and the people. Moreover, the presence of Turkish actors, side by side with their counterparts and local communities, has enabled these actors to become more adaptable to local conditions, needs, and wishes.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, Turkey is able to bypass intermediaries and deliver aid to the final beneficiaries. Indeed, a visible impact of the direct aid practice is that it reduces the cost of aid delivery by eliminating intermediaries, improves both the speed and accessibility of aid efforts, and 'facilitates direct contact with populations in these areas, leading to more needs-based solutions'.¹⁰⁷ Finally, NGO's micro-level visible assistance touches people's lives directly and partially facilitates winning of trust. Unlike the approaches often taken by both Western and non-Western organizations, Turkey's initiative has the merit of involving local people in the activities of its long-term projects.¹⁰⁸ This practice reportedly has

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹Sucuoğlu and Sazak, 'The New Kid', 75.

¹⁰²Mark Duffield, 'Risk-management and the Fortified Aid Compound: Everyday Life in Post-interventionary Society', *The Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 4, no. 4 (2010): 453–74.

¹⁰³Abby Stoddard, Adele Harmer, and Victoria Di Domenico, *Providing Aid in Insecure Environments: 2009 Update* (London: Overseas Development Institute, Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG), 2009).

¹⁰⁴Achilles et al., 'Turkish Aid Agencies', 9–10.

¹⁰⁵Donelli, 'Turkey's presence in Somalia', 44.

¹⁰⁶Sucuoğlu and Stearns, 'Turkey in Somalia', 39.

¹⁰⁷Achilles et al., 'Turkish Aid Agencies', 10.

¹⁰⁸Some of the Turkish funds fall on the territory (purchases, rents) and boosting the local economy.

empowered and engendered confidence in the local population by signaling that they can be trusted as equal partners.¹⁰⁹ Turkey's decision to operate in this way is not without risk.¹¹⁰ It has led to the observation that Turkish diplomats, aid workers, business people, and others are 'seemingly unhampered by the security concerns that limit western engagement on the ground'.¹¹¹

There must be an acknowledgement that Turkish aid, as any other aid, is not neutral and steps must be taken to mitigate potential bias. While these criticisms can also be lodged against other donors, they are particularly relevant for Turkey, given its preference for bilateralism and the lack of transparency in some aspects of its engagement.¹¹² Furthermore, Turkey's officials and NGO members have sometimes bypassed state channels – a practice that undermines the trust-building process that they are hoping to foster.¹¹³

4. Conclusion

As underlined by Robert Mason, while the growing economic roles of Turkey, China, and others in Africa represent a challenge to the existing development paradigm that needs to be evaluated in the long term, the realignment of global power to favor emergent actors also bears serious consideration.¹¹⁴ The speed at which Turkey has spread its presence in sub-Saharan Africa starting from almost zero in the region has been remarkable. The Turkish assistance model combines development, peace-building, and business, with emotive emphasis on humanity and the needs of the Global South. Moreover, the mediator role assumed by Turkey in the Somali crises has paved the way to Turkish involvement in African political issues, which conventionally were within the scope of Western powers. Such double track policy and its practical implementation on the ground through a coordinated multitrack approach, marks Turkey's engagement in sub-Saharan Africa in comparison to other external powers, bearing out its uniqueness. Although the new engagement of Turkey in Africa is unquestionable, its real weight in the current and future regional balance should not be overestimated. During the last decade, Turkey has acquired a new political, economic, and cultural space of influence in several African countries. However, Turkish efforts should be evaluated in light of the fact that Turkish policy has several limits. The first limit is ascribable to the so-called relative material capabilities. This means how Turkey is able to handle its material resources allocated to the African agenda. The main risk in Turkey's policy toward sub-Saharan Africa is the danger of overstretch. As Paul Kennedy pointed out in his analysis of the US imperial decline, overstretch is the overextension either geographically, economically, or militarily that inevitably leads to the exhaustion of vital domestic resources, leading to decline, and, at the end, the fall.¹¹⁵ The current internal political and economic turmoil and security risks, as well as the regional developments tied to Syria, might lead to a diversion of Turkish resources and attention away from Somalia. This is something that has already happened in Afghanistan and also in Myanmar, both countries in which Turkey has invested heavily in economic and

¹⁰⁹Murphy and Woods, 'Turkey's International Development', 14.

¹¹⁰Cannon, 'Turkey in Africa', 96–7.

¹¹¹Wasuge, 'Turkey's Assistance Model', 22.

¹¹²Sucuoglu and Stearns, 'Turkey in Somalia', 35–6.

¹¹³Akpınar, 'Turkey's Peacebuilding', 747.

¹¹⁴Mason, 'Patterns and Consequences', 12–13.

¹¹⁵Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988).

credibility terms. Furthermore, the multitrack approach of coordination between Turkish state and civil society aid agencies still has a lot to achieve. Indeed, levels of coordination and engagement with agencies from other countries are also perceived to be low.¹¹⁶ However, currently the most visible effect in sub-Saharan Africa of the changing of the Turkish domestic scenario is caused by the political warfare between the government and the Gülen movement.¹¹⁷ As previously mentioned, the movement, accused by the Turkish government of being responsible for the failed coup attempt of July 2016, has worked in Africa since the beginning of the new millennium in different sectors. Gülen-inspired schools are still widespread in several African countries.¹¹⁸ After the failed coup, the Turkish government received multiple expressions of solidarity from African countries. Some African countries – like Somalia, Morocco, Guinea, Ethiopia – decided to close the Gülenist schools and ban the movement's other activities. The former Gülenist schools, which were supposed to be run jointly with the state-owned Maarif Foundation and local governments, are still far from functioning effectively. Indeed, although the number of these schools is small and salaries are encouraging compared to those received working in Turkey, the Turkish Education Ministry can hardly find teachers willing to work for these schools.

Another clear limit related to Turkey's recent internal swings is a mismatch between rhetoric and reality.¹¹⁹ Indeed, for a decade Turkey has tried to carve out an image of itself as a moral state or a state of conscience, representing global values. However, following the elections of June 2015, all these efforts have been jeopardized by the drift from democratic standards toward a more autocratic regime. The significant restriction of freedoms and rights have relentlessly damaged Turkey's image outside, increasing doubts about the effectiveness of its policies generally.

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¹¹⁶Achilles et al., 'Turkish Aid Agencies', 4.

¹¹⁷Ali Balci, 'When Foreign Policy Matters: The Gülen movement's Fight with the AK Party over Iran', *Insight Turkey* 17, no. 1 (2015): 9–18; Hakkı Taş, 'A History of Turkey's AKP-Gülen conflict', *Mediterranean Politics* (2017): 1–8. doi:10.1080/13629395.2017.1328766.

¹¹⁸Shinn, 'Hizmet in Africa'.

¹¹⁹Theodore Baird, 'The Geopolitics of Turkey's "Humanitarian Diplomacy" in Somalia: A Critique', *Review of African Political Economy* 43, no. 149 (2016): 470–77.

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